



# LINCOLN CHAFEE

## U.S. SENATOR

### RHODE ISLAND

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## **CHAFEE REQUESTS \$900 MILLION IN EMERGENCY LIHEAP FUNDING FOR THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – In letters to both President Bush and Majority Leader Bill Frist, U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today wrote in strong support of the inclusion of \$900 million in emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding as part of a comprehensive appropriations package addressing the impacts of Hurricane Katrina. This package will come in addition to the \$10.5 billion supplemental appropriations package for hurricane-damaged regions passed by the Senate on Thursday and the House today.

“The devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina have resulted in millions of displaced families and individuals, with severe localized economic impacts that have rippled throughout the nation. Residents in the Gulf region deserve our immediate attention, and Congress responded yesterday by approving \$10.5 billion in supplemental appropriations for hurricane-damaged regions. As the Administration works with the Senate to craft a more comprehensive package for addressing the impacts of the hurricane, I write in support of the inclusion of \$900 million in emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding as part of this critical package,” Senator Chafee wrote in the letter.

“Prior to this national crisis, Americans were facing record prices for oil, natural gas and propane. In the Gulf of Mexico, with many oil platforms, supply lines, and refineries lost, shut-down or seriously impaired by the storm, nearly a third of the U.S. oil supply has been disrupted. Increased cost projections for gasoline and home heating oil in the months to come – particularly during a time when both commodities have increased by nearly \$.70 cents per gallon as compared to this time last year – will hit low-income families the hardest.”

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Chafee also explained how this disaster will affect Rhode Island, “[A]s the winter heating season nears, Rhode Island residents face some of the Nation’s most expensive energy burdens in association with home heating oil. Constituents throughout my state are responding to Hurricane Katrina by donating time and financial resources, but concern over increased energy costs as a result of the storm looms large...Low-income residents in my state will be unable to meet these new cost demands and a significant increase in assistance funding must be identified.”

The current rise in energy prices coupled with energy debt remaining from last winter are leading to increased disconnections and arrears among consumers – threatening the well-being of low-income families and seniors. Senator Chafee has maintained that the inclusion of emergency LIHEAP funding as part of the next supplemental appropriations is vital to ensuring the long-term impacts of Hurricane Katrina are mitigated.

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